

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AGR-20 AID-20 EB-11 NSC-10

RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-08 OMB-01 CEA-02

CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

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R 201510Z JUL 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5694

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR IN

SUBJECT: WEEKLY FOODGRAIN SITUATION

REF: A. NEW DELHI 8164; NEW DELHI 7043

BEGIN SUMMARY - MONSOON RAINS DURING THE WEEK ENDING JULY 18 WERE NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL IN 15 OUT OF THE 35 WEATHER ZONES. CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM JUNE 1 - JULY 18 HAS BEEN NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL IN 26 ZONES WHICH ACCOUNT FOR ROUGHLY 63 PERCENT OF THE FULL (KHARIF) CEREAL GRAINS HARVEST. GOVERNMENT PROCUREMENT OF WHEAT TOTALS APPROXIMATELY 4.3 MILLION TONS. IN MAHARASHTRA EFFECTIVE JULY 17 CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS ARE PROHIBITED FROM SERVING RICE ON WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY. THE CENTRAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT HAS INCREASED THE MONTHLY FOODGRAIN ALLOTMENT TO

KERALA STATE BY 10,000 TONS FOR THE CURRENT MONTH. IN WEST BENGAL ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL RICE TO MEET THE STATUTORY RATIONING REQUIREMENT. END SUMMARY

1. MONSOON RAINS DURING THE WEEK ENDING JULY 18 WERE NOT AS VIGOROUS AS IN THE PRECEDING WEEK. OF THE 35 WEATHER ZONES, ONLY 15 RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL. THE DROUGHT AREAS OF MAHARASHTRA AND GAJARAT WERE, HOWEVER, AMONG THE AREAS RECEIVING NORMAL AND ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL. CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM JUNE 1 TO JULY 18 OF THE CURRENT MONSOON SEASON HAS BEEN NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL IN 26 OF THE 35 ZONES WHICH ACCOUNT FOR ROUGHLY 63 PERCENT OF THE FALL (KHARIF) CEREAL GRAIN HARVEST. THE MORE SIGNIFICANT AREAS WHERE THIS SEASON'S RAINFALL IS CURRENTLY BELOW NORMAL ARE WEST BENGAL, BIHAR PLAINS, EASTERN U.P., COASTAL AND SOUTHERN ANDRAH PRADESH AND TAMIL NADU.

2. GOI HAS NOT EXTENDED ITS WHEAT PROCUREMENT BONUS SCHEME (DETAILS REPORTED IN PARA 1 B REF B) BEYOND ORIGINAL JULY 15 TERMINATION DATE. SINCE THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE BONUS SCHEME ON JUNE 14, ONLY 600,000 TONS OF WHEAT HAVE BEEN PROCURED RAISING THE TOTAL PROCURMENT TO APPROXIMATELY 4.3 MILLION TONS.

3. DURING THE PAST WEEK THERE WERE A NUMBER OF INCIDENTS ARISING FROM THE FOOD SITUATION. THE CPI HAS CALLED FOR A NATIONWIDE "DEHOARDING" CAMPAIGN AUG 1-7 TO EXTRACT GRAIN FROM PRIVATE HOLDERS. THE JAN SANGH PARTY HAS ANNOUNCED ITS INTENTION TO HOLD MARCHES AND PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS NEXT MONTH TO DEMAND ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF FOODGRAINS AND OTHER ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES FOR CONSUMERS AT REASONABLE PRICES. CONGEN BOMBAY REPORTS THAT EFFECTIVE JULY 17, MAHARASHTRA PROHIBITED CATERING ESTABLISHMENTS FROM SERVING RICE ON WEDNESDAYS AND SATURDAY. IN BIHAR, 200 WORKERS HELD A 24-HOUR HUNGER STRIKE TO DEMAND THAT THE HAWDAH DISTRICT BE DECLARED A FAMINE AREA. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE HUNGER STRIKE, THE WORKERS ATTEMPTED TO BREAK INTO A GOVERNMENT FOODGRAIN GODOWN TO DISTRIBUTE ITS CONTENTS AMONG THE POOR. IN KERALA, THE CHIEF MINISTER ANNOUNCED ON JULY 13 THE STATE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO DECLARE SOME COASTAL VILLAGES AS FAMINE AREAS. ON JULY 18 A 16-MEMBER DELEGATION FROM KERALA LED BY THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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STATE CHIEF MINISTER MET WITH HIGH GOI OFFICIALS TO APPRISE THEM OF THE SERIOUS FOOD SITUATION AND TO IMPRESS UPON THEM THE URGENCY OF RAISING THE STATE'S MONTHLY FOODGRAIN ALLOCATION ABOVE 75,000 TONS (45,000 TONS OF RICE AND 30,000 TONS OF WHEAT.) AS A RESULT OF THESE MEETINGS, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO INCREASE KERALA'S FOODGRAIN ALLOTMENT FOR THE CURRENT MONTH BY 5,000 TONS EACH OF WHEAT AND RICE. CONGEN CALCUTTA REPORTS THAT OFFICIALS OF WEST BENGAL ARE ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL

RICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO MEET THE STATUTORY
RATIONING REQUIREMENT.

4. NEWS MEDIA CONTINUE TO CARRY STORIES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S
DECISION TO PURCHASE IMMEDIATELY FROM ABROAD 4.5 MILLION TONS
OF FOODGRAINS. ADDITIONALLY, BA COMMITTEE UNDER THE CHARIMANSHIP
OF THE CABINET SECRETARY HAS BEEN FORMED TO LOOK INTO PROBLEMS
RELATING TO FOOD IMPORTS.

5. COMMENTS - EMBOFFS ESTIMATE THAT INDIA'S TOTAL FOODGRAIN
IMPORT NEEDS DURING USFY 74 (ASSUMING AVERAGE WEATHER CONDITIONS)
WILL BE APPROXIMATELY 5.0 MILLION TONS. THIS QUANTITY OF
FOODGRAIN IMPORTS IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THE CURRENT (LOW LEVEL)
OF FOODGRAIN CONSUMPTION AND TO PROVIDE MINIMUM WORKING STOCKS.
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